

the sum and strength of a cumulative argument. The controversialists have lost themselves, but it is in a wilderness of sweets—out of which the materials might be gathered, of such an incense at the shrine of morality, as should be altogether overpowering. Each party hath selected but one of its claims; and in the anxiety to exalt it, would shed a comparative obscurity over all the rest. This is the contest between them—not whether morality be destitute of claims; but what, out of the number that she possesses, is the great and pre-eminent claim on which man should do her homage. Their controversy perhaps never may be settled; but to make the cause of virtue suffer on this account, would be to make it suffer from the very force and abundance of its recommendations.

14. But this contemplation is pregnant with another inference, beside the worth of virtue—even the righteous character of Him, who, for the sake of upholding it hath brought such a number of contingencies together. When we look to the systems of utility and selfishness, let us look upwardly to Him, through whose ordination alone it is, that virtue hath such power to prosper the arrangement of life and of society. Or when told of the principle that virtue is its own reward, let us not forget Him, who so constituted our moral nature, as to give the feeling of an exquisite charm, both in the possession of virtue and in the con-